

Challenges for Peacebuilding in Asia: from the global perspective

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am very, very happy to be here today and particularly to discuss with such eminent colleagues and friends and experts about peacebuilding and peacebuilding in Asia. It's a very thankless task of being the last speaker. So, I was a little bit nervous about this, but come to think of it, Ambassador Nishida, you will be the last speaker. So, I feel actually a little bit better now. Also I promised Ambassador Nishida that I will try very hard not to speak UN jargon. I grew up professionally at the United Nations. I've worked there now for 25 years. So, I'm very much of a UN person. I've spent my entire career working on peace and security issues. Of course, I will speak a little bit from the UN perspective. So, you forgive me if I do sound like a UN official.

The UN turned 70 last year, amidst a troubled time and complex wars. In many ways, 2015 was a very important year for the United Nations, it was a year of reflection of where the UN was successful or unsuccessful in its core task of maintaining peace and security. At the same time, it was a year where we celebrated some accomplishments as well. Anthony spoke earlier about the climate change challenges. 2015 actually marked the adoption of an historic Paris Accord on Climate Change which was really a great accomplishment. And on the development side, the member states, all 193 countries of the United Nations, agreed on a new

vision on how to achieve sustainable development for all by 2030. In addition to the Sustainable development goals, a mechanism for financing these goals was also adopted (Addis Ababa Action Plan for Financing). So, some of these things really can be seen as accomplishments in 2015.

But looking at the peace and security side, we face a lot of challenges. And I won't elaborate on the challenges, because they have been very well and eloquently described especially by Anthony preceding me. I will be looking at this complex world, especially the peace and security area, from the perspective of the United Nations whose first and primary objective is to secure peace and maintain peace. The United Nations Secretary-General himself took some initiatives, and member states also took initiatives to reflect on what the UN has accomplished and what stands ahead of us.

So, 2015 for us was a year of reflection and a number of experts and eminent people from around the world came together to review three important areas. The first one was a review on the peace operations and this includes not just the peacekeeping operations, but also what we call special political missions which are essentially UN missions without the troops. That was the first one. The second one was the review on what we call the global study on 1325. As was earlier mentioned, this is the landmark UN resolution that spoke about women, peace and security and

it coincided with the 20th Anniversary for the Beijing platform of Action as well. So, the whole role of women was also reviewed. The third one was peacebuilding. An expert group was appointed to review the UN peacebuilding architecture. And that is really the focus of my presentation today. As it so happens I also work in the office that supports the UN peacebuilding architecture.

And these three reviews if we look at them together and if we extract the key messages, they all had very, very clear common assessments and common messages. One is invest more in prevention; Anthony said it earlier, too, invest more in prevention to stop the violence from escalating into violent conflict in the first place. This was the one loud and clear message that came out from all three expert reviews. The second is, bring coherence to our work for peace and end the fragmentation. And when we talk about fragmentation, we talk about the UN system not working as one, the UN system working in its silos, but also member states looking at peace and security from a very narrow point of view. I myself as a student looking at the UN and wanting to work in the field of peace and security, I majored in international law, I majored in international organizations, international relations. I did not major in international economics, development or social studies. But we all know now that peace cannot be separated from development and from the UN point of view, there is no peace without development or without human rights. And now we have all come to the realization that really this understanding has to be operationalized.

A third message was a call to forge stronger partnerships. We cannot do this alone. Nobody can do this alone. The challenges we face,

the problems we face are too complex and not one country, not one organization can handle them alone. As the UN, we are called to work closely with regional organizations and regional actors who might have an advantage in a specific region, but we are also called to strengthen our partnership with international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank for example. Another message was to engage more women. And of course, Anthony spoke about it already and it's true. It's very clear. There will be no peace if you do not engage women at all stages of your prevention efforts, of your peacebuilding or your peacekeeping operations, including at the decision-making level. This was another clear message.

Another important point in enhancing our collective capacity to sustain peace in conflict affected countries is to engage the youth; they must be seen as peacebuilders not just sources of potential conflict. And last but not least, the need to assure more predictable financing for peace was emphasized. Of course, none of this comes without any funding.

The UN peacebuilding architecture, as we call it, was established in 2005. And we have now had 10 years of experience with that. And it consists of the peacebuilding commission which is a subsidiary organ to the General Assembly and the Security Council and it has about 31 member states. And we have the peacebuilding fund which is the Secretary General's fund which is the vehicle to kick start some of the peacebuilding initiatives. And it used to be called the \$100 million fund which is no longer now and I'll talk about it a bit later. And the peacebuilding support office which is my office that is supporting both the peacebuilding commission and the

peacebuilding fund and works on these policy issues.

In April this year, after all these reviews were completed, Member States adopted a resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. And we consider this resolution which was adopted both by the General Assembly and the Security Council as a landmark resolution, because it really lays out the vision of how we at the United Nations should look at peacebuilding. And I invite you to look at it. It is a Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016). And any of you who do some UN studies, you would be able to find it right away.

It took 6 months of very, long arduous negotiation. Every single word was negotiated and I'll try to describe that later. But just to speak a little bit of concrete cases and what do we mean by peacebuilding? What does the UN do? Does the UN do anything apart from sending troops and having a hard time in South Sudan, for example? And is it really just a question of challenges in Africa? Already my colleagues and others have talked about peacebuilding success stories and experiences in Asia. And of course, we have many, many lessons that can be shared and learned from and applied to other countries. But just to outline a few points, how we approach from the UN peacebuilding point of view, what are some fundamentals that we need as we talk about engaging in and supporting a country's peacebuilding efforts?

One is that a request must come from the government. We don't just go there and say, here is a great idea how to help your country build. So, it has to be upon request by the government itself and this we take rather seriously. The next step is usually a joint conflict analysis. And again it is a joint analysis. It is not just the UN sending

its political officers to analyze what we think could be the weakness of that country. We actually engage the government, we engage the civil society, we engage those people who that country itself decides are some eminent experts and do the analysis together. And this is the inclusive part of our approach, based on that analysis, a peacebuilding priority plan will be developed. All of this takes some time. But it is a very, sort of set process that we believe needs to be done thoroughly before we can really talk about what are the areas a particular country needs support for.

We have broadly four areas for peacebuilding support: one is support for the implementation of peace agreements. That's a very popular area where we do a lot of work. One is in the area of coexistence and peaceful resolutions of conflicts. These include dialogue processes, for example, or support to elections. Then, there is the economic recovery and peace dividend. That's the income generation, peace dividend kind of activities. And the fourth one is to establish administrative services, for example extension of state authority. So, this is working with central and local governments, helping actually the state to extend its authority further down in the country side beyond the capital. Those are the broad areas we get engaged. And I want to speak about two examples and maybe later during Q&A, there is a chance to speak about others.

One is an example in the Pacific, Bougainville, which is actually an autonomous region in the country Papua New Guinea. I don't know how many know. Bougainville is an island that experienced devastating conflict from 1988 to 1999. It was over access to resources from a copper mine and it also had to do with the identity

of the people of Bougainville. The casualty of that war which lasted ten years was almost 10% of the population. Today, I think Bougainville's population is about 250,000 to 300,000. But the death toll was estimated at 15,000 to 20,000. That's a big number for a small place.

The UN was among the international partners that supported the formulation and the implementation of the peace agreement at that time in early 1999 and 2000 and oversaw a good part of the implementation of the peace agreement. After the UN Mission left, which was a very small operation, the regular UN country team remained in country to continue the development support. The fact that the UN stayed, retained a small office in Bougainville flying the UN flag, gave the Bougainvillians confidence and credibility to the UN that it had continued to provide support. And this peace agreement stipulated that Bougainville, which became an autonomous region of the country, can decide within 10 years whether it wants to continue to be autonomous or whether it wants to go independent through a referendum. And this referendum time period is coming up and I think they decided recently that they will have the referendum in 2019. It's a hugely political process, of course and the closer we get to the date, the risk of instability and violence is becoming more and more real.

There was concern that the peace process might unravel into violence. There were a good number of people who kept their weapons as an insurance policy for independence. There is another caveat. Even if the referendum decides they want to go independent, this decision has to be ratified by the Parliament of Papua New Guinea. And there is a chance of course that it will not ratify that. So, all of that was a clear sign

that this was a case where we should take preventive action.

In 2013, the Peacebuilding Support Office worked together with UN political colleagues and the UN Country Team in Papua New Guinea to reach a common understanding of the situation. We engaged together with the government. It was at a time when other than Australia, there were almost no other international partner focusing on this particular situation. And we devised several areas to support and currently, are still active in areas such as building trust between the government and Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea and the government in Bougainville, to help inform Bougainvillians to be equipped to make an informed choice. These are civic education kind of activities and other areas they identified, including some trauma healing to start rebuilding their social fabric, and some special focus on women participation in all processes as well as addressing violence against women. So, these are some of the priority areas Bougainvillians themselves identified and the UN decided to support.

This is one example where I can certainly illustrate how the nature of peacebuilding is inherently political while at the same time UN development agencies such as the UNDP and UN women for example, were included to implement the peacebuilding strategy. It needed to have the political backing and some understanding of what peacebuilding entails.

So, I have only 5 minutes left and I will have to skip my other example. I wanted to talk about Kyrgyzstan and Sri Lanka. But very briefly, Sri Lanka is another very interesting case where we are now heavily working and investing together with the government in the direction of helping the country address its post conflict

challenges and opportunities. The conflict had ended in 2009 but it was really almost six years later that the opportunity came for peacebuilding support, when there was a political change and the new government was committed to addressing Sri Lanka's own challenges on peacebuilding and particularly the issue of transitional justice and human rights which had been a challenge for a long time.

I said that the resolution that was adopted in April was a landmark resolution and already my colleagues talked about it earlier. What is different now? This realization that really peacebuilding is much bigger than just focusing on what to do once the conflict ends. It's much more than just doing the reconstruction and rebuilding of infrastructure. It is a much, much more complicated and complex process. So, member states really decided to define it. And they decided to define it as sustaining peace. Sustaining peace, it is hooked to the concept of sustainable development.

How can we achieve sustaining peace and what does it mean? It is not just the activity undertaken after the conflict. That concept has gone now. It is in itself a goal and a process. It is about preventing the outbreak, the continuation, escalation, and recurrence of conflict. It is about addressing root causes, not the symptoms, but the root causes. What is really at the cause, at the bottom of why there is a conflict in the country to start with? It is about looking at a coordinated and coherent approach, also to include sustained and sustainable economic growth, so linking again the peace and economic development, how that has to come together. For that, of course, you need joint analysis and joint planning. You have to have very good understanding of the situation.

And what is the timeframe of peacebuilding? I've already said it is not just post-conflict, but it is also before and after. We have to start looking into what are the peacebuilding priorities, for example in countries where there are peacekeeping operations. In Liberia, we have a peacekeeping operation that will withdraw within a year or two. Already today, we have to start identifying and investing in peacebuilding areas so that when the UN peacekeeping operation leaves, everything doesn't collapse and there is some kind of a partnership with the government to carry on the peacebuilding work and that is an important aspect.

Peacebuilding is also primarily a national process. National ownership is an important concept. Again it is not imposed by anybody outside. But it is also not just the government. It has to be an inclusive process. And here member states of course come from around the world and so, you have different interpretations on what inclusive national ownership means. Some countries were a little bit nervous about saying 'inclusive national ownership' which is really the concept that we like. It is national ownership, national leadership by the government, but not just the government, central government, it should also go beyond the central government and the region. But also it has to include a very broad sector of the civil society, all segments of society.

When we look at peacebuilding and we want to identify what are the biggest priorities to address, it cannot just be the government. It has to have an active participation by the women leaders, by the young people, by the leaders in the region, by the religious leaders, those people who really make and shape the country. That is an important aspect. We need to have strong

leadership and the political will of the country. And the UN also needs political leadership by the UN representative in the country. Sometimes it's the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Sometimes it is the Resident Coordinator who heads the UN team on the ground. And sometimes it is just the most senior officer who happens to be in charge in the country. And then again partnership with others is critical as I already mentioned.

Now, one word about adequate and predictable financing. All of this needs to be funded in some ways. And I mentioned that the peacebuilding fund that was established 10 years ago used to be a \$100 million dollar fund. And that was quite adequate in the first years. We fund about activities and peacebuilding initiatives in just over 20 countries, no more. Unfortunately, today, this amount is down to about \$70 million. And funding from the PBF is meant to be catalytic. We are not there to fund development programs. Our investment is meant to identify key areas where nobody else goes. It is politically risky, but has a chance to turn around the situation and give early results so that other larger donors can pick up after. But just listen to these figures. I think these are figures from 2015. We were investing about \$4.5 billion for development, \$6.5 billion for humanitarian aid, although I think now the need is up to 20 billion. And the budget for peacekeeping operation annually was \$8.4 billion last year. And we are struggling to have \$100 million for peacebuilding activities and, by the way, prevention and UN diplomacy for prevention, mediation, merely have \$20 million allocated. So, that is still the reality. Even though we have this overall global realization that there is the need for prevention and the need to invest in it, it apparently is not so

easy after all for member states to actually put the funding towards peace, prevention and peacebuilding. My office is organizing a pledging conference in September and we hope that the political momentum we have now will help us replenish our fund.

Two words to conclude. Just what I would like you remember is the concept of sustaining peace, that it is about providing a common vision for a common future to all sectors of society. That is what we understand about peacebuilding. Women have to be part of it. Youth have to be part of it. And moving forward, the resolution also put quite some expectation to the next Secretary-General to continue this work and to make sure that the United Nations system as a whole will make sustaining peace its own core priority. Such leadership will help the entire UN system focus on peace at the core of all their activities; that each of their activities, be it through World Food Program or supporting the refugees or development, that peace in that country has to be the first and foremost important priority. The next Secretary-General will have a big job whoever she or he will be.

Japan has championed peacebuilding over the years and I have great expectation that this will continue. Just yesterday, Japan was hosting an open debate in the Security Council on peacebuilding in Africa and already a day later there was a great presidential statement issued by the Security Council that summarized in a very substantive manner how the Security Council would ensure that peacebuilding in Africa achieves a new level. You should also know that when Japan became a non-permanent member of the Security Council starting this year, it was the 11th time that Japan achieved this. No other country has been a non-permanent member of the

Security Council eleven times. And that means that Japan has quite some support and there is a lot of expectation for Japan as a member from Asia to continue this leadership. So, Japan is a member of both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council and the partnership and complementarity between those two organs is really critical to make sure that we do better in our work for peace. I also have great expectation as Japan will cast their important vote deciding who the next Secretary General will be.

I think it was very opportune that we talk about peace here in. Hiroshima was always an inspiration for many people, not only in Japan, but around the world for countries that have undergone conflict. And they remember and they know that Hiroshima had a devastating past, but has overcome it in a remarkable way. So, this is what people aspire to and I think that we have this discussion in Hiroshima is a perfect example. So, I would like to thank Ambassador for this great opportunity and look forward to your questions and discussion. Thank you.